(b) whether all the trade unions have charged Government for not following the recommendations of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) allowing 11 per cent of rate of interest on EPF and calling a meeting of CBT; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) The CBT (EPF) in its meeting held on 23.3.2001 had made a recommendation for crediting interest in accounts of the EPF subscribers @10.25% per annum on the monthly running balance for the year 2001-2002. Under item 8 of Schedule II of the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 read with paragraph 60(1) of the EPF Scheme, the rate of interest on EPF is required to be determined by the Central Government in consultation with the Central Board of Trustees (Employees Provident Fund). Further as per para 60(4) of the EPF Scheme, in determining the rate of interest, Central Government is required to ensure that there is no overdrawal on the Interest Suspense Account as a result of giving interest to the EPF subscribers. Accordingly the rate of interest was fixed @9.5% per annum for the year 2001-2002.

Irregularities in EPF Organisation

582. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Audit finds large PF black hole' published in "The Hindustan Times" New Delhi dated 7th April, 2001;

(b) if so, whether any enquiries have been conducted into serious irregularities, lapses and frauds committed in EPF Organisation in respect of lakhs of employees involving crores of rupees, as alleged in the news-item;

(c) if so, the details and results thereof;

(d) whether any responsibility has been fixed on errant officers and staff of EPF Organisation in this regard; and

(e) if so, the action taken to ensure that such irregularities and lapses do not occur again?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a)Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The exercise was only an internal computerised verification with reference to the updation of individual member accounts. There was no issue of irregularity, lapses of frauds and no financial implication was involved. No loss has been caused to the Fund. The verification indicated large backlog in bookkeeping function of updation of members' accounts for which the Central Board of Trustees (EPF) have initiated corrective action.

(c) As a result of the corrective action 40,92,996 individuals accounts that were identified under the above computerised verification have been updated and account slips issued to such members.

(d) and (e) In order to monitor timely remittance of monthly contribution, a special computer software has been developed and operationalised. This monitors contribution flow, identifies default and generates notices for corrective action. A separate software has also been implemented to ensure that remittance of contributions are promptly posted in member's accounts and the accounts remain updated.

Number of Complaint Cases

583. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of complaints registered with the Department during the year 2000-2001 till date;

(b) the number of cases out of the above settled so far and number of pending cases;

(c) what are the reasons for inordinate delay in disposing of the cases; and

(d) what steps have been taken to take minimum time for settlement of the cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) 4723 complaints were registered with the Department of AR & PG from 1.4.2000 to 30.6.2001.